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DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
WASHINGTON

January 15, 1951

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. My dear Dr. Langer:

I am returning herewith the paper (draft NIE 3/1) you sent to me with your letter of 28 December, 1950.

This paper I have read, but pressure of other matters has not allowed me to study it with the care it deserves. However, there are set forth below certain thoughts which occur to me, for whatever they may be worth:

(a) It is my view Mr. Stalin dominates the scene in the Soviet Union, and his will be the deciding voice in any decision of so grave a character as unleashing World War III. My best "guess" is that Stalin will not so decide, although there persists an uneasy thought that his ambition and vanity might be played upon, with unhappy results. On balance, it is suggested the odds are about 3 to 2 against his putting all his record to the uncertain test of battle.

(b) It is further my view that the Politburo may believe it has such good chances of extending controls in other marginal areas, with consequent reduction of the Western World's power to resist, that actual warfare will not be resorted to until "the last citadel of capitalism" needs to be stormed. This idea is in consonance with Communist theory, and seems to have prospects of success in the eyes of those doctrinaire gentlemen.

(c) We have

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(c) We have felt in Moscow for some time that the Kremlin would rely chiefly upon "satellite" or "fringe" states to do the dirty work, with the skirts of the Soviet Union held daintily aside. Thus, acute situations would be created with the World on the brink of war, but Soviet policy always apparently on the side of peace. That control of such "limited" wars is slippery and doubtful, we now see demonstrated in the Far East.

(d) The Soviet Union could be forced into a situation, by maladroitness or emotional actions on the part of the Western World, from which escape is only possible by fighting. No doubt such possibilities are envisaged by the Politburo, and precautionary measures have been prepared. This is a danger to world peace which it is our duty to control.

Thanks very much for your kindness, and best wishes to you and all your associates.

Sincerely yours,

*Alan G. Kirk*

Alan G. Kirk  
American Ambassador

Enclosure -

Copy No. 2 of  
draft NIE 3/1

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